

PRAYING WITH ST. JOHN PAUL II



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INTRODUCTION

THE word “novena” comes from the Latin *novem* (nine). To make a novena is to undertake an itinerary of prayer that will last nine days and will have as its aim to request from God one or more favors. If possible, the nine days will follow one another without interruption. But one may also make a novena of two days over two days’ time or at the rate of one day per week over nine weeks. It is really up to each person to choose the rhythm that is suitable. What is important is to pray persistently, perseveringly, and confidently.

It is difficult to say with certainty what may be the origin of the novena of prayers that has become popular in Catholicism. Several authors relate it to the nine days during which, after Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples remained in prayer with Mary. Here is what is written in the Acts of the Apostles:

While at table with [his apostles],
Jesus enjoined them not to depart

from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” . . . Then from the Mount of Olives they returned to Jerusalem. . . . When they entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All, with one accord, devoted themselves to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (*Acts 1:4-5, 12-14*).

During this novena, we will have nine specific requests to make of God in union with Saint John Paul II and through his intercession.

Day One: Lord, let me love life.

Day Two: Lord, give me the joy of believing.

DAY ONE

LORD, LET ME LOVE LIFE

1. *I slowly make the Sign of the Cross while saying:* In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then I say: Gracious God, help me to pray to You well with Saint John Paul II.

2. *I think about John Paul II:*

He loved life, and he lived with intensity every phase of it. He did not retreat in face of difficulties, and he never hesitated to take up challenges. He fulfilled his responsibilities as Pope to the utmost degree. What does this man mean to me? If I were asked to point to one thing that has especially struck me about him, what would my response be?

3. *I read some verses from the New Testament:*

- [It is written:] “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” He is God, not of the dead, but of the living (*Mk 12:26-27*).

DAY TWO

LORD, GIVE ME THE JOY OF BELIEVING

1. *I slowly make the Sign of the Cross while saying: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

Then I say: Gracious God, help me to pray to You well with Saint John Paul II.

2. *I think about John Paul II:*

I call to mind some photographs of him before he became seriously ill. The majority of these pictures show him smiling and sometimes laughing heartily.

The more one is familiar with this man the more one knows that, despite the difficulties he faced and the sufferings he endured, he was a Christian, a priest, a bishop, a cardinal, and a Pope who was happy to believe.

3. *I read some verses from the New Testament:*

DAY FIVE

LORD, PROTECT FAMILIES

1. *I slowly make the Sign of the Cross while saying:* In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then I say: Gracious God, help me to pray to You well with Saint John Paul II.

2. *I think about John Paul II:*

Born on May 18, 1920, he received at his Baptism the name of Karol Józef Wojtyła.

Olga, his sister, whom he never knew, died at birth in 1914.

He lost his mother, Emilia Kaszowska, in 1929.

His older brother, Edmond, who was a physician, died in 1932.

His father, Karol Wojtyła, died on February 16, 1941.

3. *I read some verses from the Bible:*

- Whoever respects his father will be gladdened by children; on the day



A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF ST. JOHN PAUL II (1920–2014)

May 18, 1920

Born as Karol Józef Wojtyła in Wadowice (Poland)

November 1, 1946

Ordained a priest in Krakow

September 28, 1958

Consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow, becoming the youngest Bishop in Poland

1962-1965

Participated in the Second Vatican Council

January 13, 1964

Named Archbishop of Krakow

June 26, 1967

Created a Cardinal by Paul VI

October 16, 1978

Elected the 264th Pope, at 58 years of age, on the eighth ballot. He took the name of John Paul II.